

RFP Questions and Clarifications Memorandum

To: Vendors Responding to RFP Number 3905 for the Mississippi Board of Cosmetology (BOC)

From: Craig P. Orgeron, Ph.D.

Date: August 29, 2016

Subject: Responses to Questions Submitted and Clarifications to Specifications

Contact Name: Donna Hamilton

Contact Phone Number: 601-432-8114

Contact E-mail Address: Donna.Hamilton@its.ms.gov

RFP Number 3905 is hereby amended as follows:

1. Section VII Technical Specifications, Item 7.3.6 is being modified to read:

Vendor must initially mail the Candidate's Written Examination results to the Candidate's school within 30 days after completing the test. As a follow up, Vendor may email or send via secure online solution the Candidate's Written Examination results.

2. Section VII Technical Specifications, Item 7.5.8.1 is being modified to read:

Vendor must notify the Instructor Candidate via email ~~and~~ or in writing two weeks in advance of the Subject Matter.

3. Section VII Technical Specifications, Item 7.7.1 is being modified to read:

Reports requested by BOC from the Vendor must be submitted electronically via email or secure online solution in PDF and/or Excel or mutually agreed upon format.

4. Section VII Technical Specifications, Item 7.8.2 is being modified to read:

The awarded Vendor must submit test results and other requested documents to BOC via a secure File Transfer Protocol (FTP) ~~as well as via email in a specified format~~ as per BOC.

5. Section VII Technical Specifications, Item 7.8.2 is being modified to read:

8.3 Vendor must propose a fixed fee for all examinations listed in Section VIII, Cost Information Submission. ~~agree to the following Fees Schedule for the Written~~

~~Examination and the Practical.~~ This Fee Schedule ~~which is set by~~ must be approved by the Mississippi State Board of Cosmetology (BOC) Board and must remain the same throughout the term of the Agreement and any renewal terms.

~~8.3.1 The Written Examination for Cosmetologists, Estheticians, and Manicurists must be no more than \$50.00 and no more than \$75.00 for the Practical.~~

~~8.3.2 The Written Examination for Instructors shall be no more than \$75.00 and no more than \$100.00 for the Practical.~~

6. Title page, INVITATION is modified as follows:

INVITATION: Sealed proposals, subject to the attached conditions, will be received at this office until Friday, September 9, 2016 @ 3:00 p.m. Central Time for the acquisition of the products/services described below for the acquisition of the products/services described below for Mississippi Board of Cosmetology.

7. Title page, third box is modified as follows:

<p>PROPOSAL, SUBMITTED IN RESPONSE TO RFP NO. 3905 DUE September 9, 2016 @ 3:00 p.m., ATTENTION: Donna Hamilton</p>
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8. Section VII Technical Specifications, Item 3 Project Schedule is amended as follows:

Task	Date
First Advertisement Date for RFP	06/28/16
Second Advertisement Date for RFP	07/05/16
Deadline for Vendor's Written Questions	3:00 p.m. Central Time on 07/15/16
Deadline for Questions Answered and Posted to ITS Web Site	07/29/16 08/29/16
Open Proposals	08/10/16 09/09/16
Evaluation of Proposals	08/10/16 — 08/25/16 Begin 09/09/16
Begin Contract Negotiation	08/29/16 09/30/16

Vendor must include in their proposal a response to each amended requirement as listed above. Vendor must respond using the same terminology as provided in the original requirements.

The following questions were submitted to ITS and are being presented as they were submitted, except to remove any reference to a specific vendor. This information should assist you in formulating your response.

Question 1: General. What is the anticipated contract award date?

Response: Contract negotiations are scheduled to begin September 30, 2016. The actual start date of negotiations could vary depending upon the number of proposals received and whether clarifications of Vendor proposals are required. As stated in Section IV, Item 14.1, all contractual issues must successfully be negotiated within fifteen working days from the Vendor's initial receipt of the project contract from ITS, unless ITS consents to extend the period.

Question 2: General. Please provide a copy of the current contract for these services, including all amendments, renewals, and/or extensions.

Response: Vendors may access a copy of all contracts on the State's transparency website at:
<http://www.transparency.mississippi.gov/contracts/contracts.aspx>.

Question 3: General Overview and Background. Can the state provide any statistical data more current than 2013? If possible, please provide candidate volumes by exam title for 2014 and 2015 as well.

Response:

2015	Volume
COS Instructor Practical	16
COS Instructor Theory	18
COS Practical	511
COS Theory	522
ESTH Practical	29
ESTH Theory	31
NAIL TECH Practical	71
NAIL TECH Theory	76
TOTAL	1274

Question 4: General Overview and Background. Please provide candidate volumes by location for the last three years.

Response: The number of candidate by location for the last three years is not available.

Question 5: General Overview and Background. Please provide retake volumes by exam title for the most current year.

Response:

Retake Volumes since 1-1-2016	
Course	Volume
COS Practical	45
COS Theory	78
ESTH Practical	3
ESTH Theory	5

INST Practical	3
INST Theory	6
NAIL TECH Practical	11
NAIL TECH Theory	114

Question 6: Section VII, Item 7.2.5.4. Is the administration of the written examination within the correctional facility required to be computer based or paper pencil? Approximately how many administrations annually?

Response: **Administration of the written examination may either be computer-based or paper/pencil. The number of examinations administered at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility was zero in 2015 and 5 have been administered in 2016.**

Question 7: Section VII, Items 7.3.5 and 7.4.5. If the vendor is able to provide immediate scoring at the time of the written examination and provide the candidate with a pass/fail score prior to their leaving the test center, is this acceptable in lieu of mailing candidates' written scores within two weeks of their examination?

Response: **Yes.**

Question 8: Section VII, Item 7.4.7. Would the Board consider an examination solution for the Esthetics Practical Examination that did not require live models?

Response: **No.**

Question 9: Section VII, Item 8.3 Fee Schedule. Please provide the current fees for each exam title, showing portions of the fees paid to the vendor and portions paid to the State (and/or other organizations), as applicable.

Response: **The Board receives no fees. Current examination fees are:**

- **Practical AND written cosmetology, esthetician, manicure & instructor: \$183**
- **Written cosmetology, esthetician, manicure & instructor: \$93**
- **Practical cosmetology, esthetician, manicure & instructor: \$90**

Question 10: Section VII, Item 8.3 Fee Schedule. Are any fees to be remitted to the state?

Response: **None.**

Question 11: Section VII, Item 8.3 Fee Schedule. The RFP states that there are maximum fees that can be assessed, but in reviewing the current vendor's fees, they are exceeding the maximums stated. Is it acceptable to assess more than the fee maximums stated in the RFP?

Response: **Yes. See Amendment Item No. 5 above. The fees proposed for examinations will be evaluated as part of Vendor's overall score so Vendors should provide their most competitive pricing.**

Question 12: At what frequency are written exams currently being administered?

Response: **Monthly.**

Question 13: With respect to test administration for written and practical examinations, does the Board of Cosmetology (BOC) have a list of recommended vendors to partner with in securing exam locations:

Response: **No.**

Question 14: The RFP states that equipment must be new. Specifically, what pieces of equipment need to be new?

Response: **Vendor did not include a reference to the Item in question from RFP No. 3905. The State assumes that the question may be in reference to Item 22, Equipment Condition, in Section IV. Since RFP 3905 is for Testing Administration Services, the State does not anticipate that the Vendor would be supplying equipment that the State would own. The State does however expect all testing supplies used in the administration of examinations to be new.**

Question 15: The RFP states the vendor must attend semi-annual BOC meetings. Is it expected that this attendance is in person or via conference call and/or webinar?

Response: **BOC anticipates that Vendor's attendance via conference call would normally suffice; however, BOC reserves the right to require the Vendor attend in person.**

Question 16: Please provide more recent (2014 & 2015) statistics on the number of candidates that are tested annually.

Response: **BOC does not have statistics available for 2014. There were 1,274 candidates in 2015.**

Question 17: Would the BOC be open to a vendor bringing in current, validated national examinations within 30 days of contract execution, followed by a job analysis of current MS licensees to confirm and update the exam content outline?

Response: **No.**

Question 18: Please clarify exam fees:

- According to the RFP, exam fees are to be no more than:
 - o Written cosmetology, esthetician & manicure: \$50.00
 - o Practical cosmetology, esthetician & manicure: \$75.00
 - o Written instructor: \$75.00
 - o Written instructor: \$100.00
- Yet, current exam fees listed in the candidate handbooks are:
 - o Practical AND written cosmetology, esthetician, manicure & instructor: \$183
 - o Written cosmetology, esthetician, manicure & instructor: \$93

o Practical cosmetology, esthetician, manicure & instructor: \$90

Response: BOC desires to lower examination fees for students; however, BOC has amended Section VII, Item 8.3 as noted above in Amendment Item No. 5. The fees proposed for examinations will be evaluated as part of Vendor's overall score so Vendors should provide their most competitive pricing.

Question 19: General Overview and Background. Although the RFP does not require application processing, we understand based on the incumbent's current candidate handbook, that the incumbent is providing application processing services. Are application processing services for all seven programs included in the scope of this RFP? If so, please describe the application process for these programs, specifically detailing services the vendor is required to perform within the scope of this contract. If not, will these services be included in a separate RFP?

Response: Application processing functionality is not a part of RFP No. 3905. There are no plans to issue a separate RFP.

Question 20: General Overview and Background. Please provide the total number of examinations administered in 2014 and 2015, broken down by item type.

Response: See the response to Question #3 above.

Question 21: Section VII, Item 5.3 - Candidate testing must begin within 30 days after contract execution.

The RFP states, "Candidate testing must begin within 30 days after contract execution". We recommend an implementation period of 90 days, to allow for a smooth transition to a new vendor with no interruption of service (possibly longer, if migration of application data is included in the scope of this RFP) to implement the program following contract award. We ask that BOC please extend the program launch date in order to ensure a fair and competitive bidding process.

Response: The Board of Cosmetology prefers no down time for student examinations. Vendor must fully describe their proposed implementation strategy in their response to RFP No. 3905, including how the Vendor will minimize down time for student examinations.

Question 22: Section VII, Item 7.1.7 - The Vendor must grant special accommodations for Candidates pursuant to the American Disabilities Act (ADA).

Please provide accommodations testing volume for the past two years, broken down by exam type (level and written/practical).

Response: 2015 – NONE
2016 – 5 (ALL THEORY)

Question 23: Section VII, Item 7.2.5.4 – Central Mississippi Correctional Facility which is located in Pearl, Rankin County (on an as needed basis or upon request).

Please provide testing volumes at the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility.

Response: **2015 – NONE**
 2016 - FIVE

Question 24: Section VII, Item 7.3.6 - Vendor must initially mail the Candidate's Written Examination results to the Candidate's school within 30 days after completing the test. As a follow up, Vendor may email the Candidate's Written Examination results.

Our Company does not email candidate data (PII) as a best practice, in order to provide for data security. May the vendor provide a candidate's written examination results via a secure online solution rather than sending a follow up email?

Response: **Yes. See Amendment Item No. 1 above.**

Question 25: Section VII, Item 7.5.8.1 - Vendor must notify the Instructor Candidate via email and in writing two weeks in advance of the Subject Matter.

We propose to notify the Instructor Candidate "via email or in writing" (rather than "via email and in writing") consistent with current program requirements. (This change was made during the 2014 bid process). Will the BOC make that change to the RFP?

Response: **Yes. See Amendment Item No. 2 above.**

Question 26: Section VII, Item 7.7.1 - Reports requested by BOC from the Vendor must be submitted electronically via email in PDF and/or Excel or mutually agreed upon format.

Our Company does not email candidate data (PII) as a best practice, in order to provide for data security. May the vendor provide the reports noted via a secure online solution rather than email?

Response: **Yes. See Amendment Item No. 3 above.**

Question 27: Section VII, Item 7.8.1 - BOC's current licensing system was designed in FoxPro 6.0. BOC has been in discussions about upgrading their system to a more current technology platform.

Will our company perform a consultant role only to meet this requirement, with no development or travel? If not, please provide additional detail.

Response: **The awarded Vendor for RFP No. 3905 would only be expected to perform a consultant role for requirement 7.8.1.**

Question 28: Section VII, Item 7.8.2 - The awarded Vendor must submit test results and other requested documents to BOC via a secure File Transfer Protocol (FTP) as well as via email in a specified format as per BOC.

Our company does not email candidate data (PII) as a best practice, in order to provide for data security. Is it possible to use the secure FTP solution and eliminate emailing results and other requested documents as noted above?

Response: **Yes. See Amendment Item No. 4 above.**

Question 29: Section VII, Item 7.8.5 – Should BOC upgrade their current system, Vendor must agree to assist BOC to develop an interface with their new licensing system.

Will our company perform a consultant role only to meet this requirement, with no development or travel? If not, please provide additional detail.

Response: **The awarded Vendor for RFP 3905 would only be expected to perform a consultant role for requirement 7.8.5.**

Question 30: Section VII, Item 7.9 - Candidate Information Handbook Requirements

Is the BOC amenable to an online-only candidate handbook that would be accessible on-demand via the selected vendor's website, in lieu of the selected vendor printing, storing, and distributing hard copies? With this option, candidates with Internet access are able to view and print the handbook and forms directly at the point-of-use, thereby reducing the numbers to be published and ultimately containing costs for constituents.

Response: **Yes.**

Question 31: Section IV, Items 28 - 31 (pages 20, 21)

In performance of the services under any resulting contract, contractors will utilize significant existing proprietary computer programs, source code, materials, test items, tests and intellectual property that have been previously developed by the contractor or its 3rd party licensor ("Contractor Intellectual Property"), some of which may be trade secret, copyright, patent and trademark protected. We presume the state understands contractor or its licensors will retain all Intellectual Property rights to Contractor's Intellectual Property including derivative or customized works and the state will not disclose or provide any such Contractor Intellectual Property to another person not a party to this agreement; is our presumption correct?

Response: **Yes.**

RFP responses are due Friday, September 9, 2016, at 3:00 p.m. (Central Time).

If you have any questions concerning the information above or if we can be of further assistance, please contact Donna Hamilton at 601-432-8114 or via email at Donna.Hamilton@its.ms.gov.

cc: ITS Project File Number 42260